

## Minister of Foreign Affairs Ilia Darchiashvili Meets with EU Commissioner Oliver Varhelyi

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Ilia Darchiashvili, visited Brussels on a working visit during which he held meetings with the European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy, Oliver Varhelyi, and the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission, Gert Jan Koopman. The press office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia disseminated information about this.

According to their reports, the purpose of the visit was to assess the process of Georgia's accession to the European Union, discuss the current agenda of Georgia-EU cooperation, and determine future steps.

"It was noted that Georgia made significant efforts in the context of the EU enlargement policy, which were reflected both in the report prepared by the country and in the oral assessment of the European Commission. The parties reviewed the current progress in implementing the 12 priorities set by the European Commission. The reforms carried out by Georgia in various directions, which contribute to fulfilling the 12 priorities, were positively evaluated.



The parties gave a positive assessment of all aspects of Georgia-EU cooperation, highlighting the high dynamics of the current year. Special attention was paid to the steps taken in terms of sectoral and economic integration, as well as future plans. They emphasized the important role of Georgia and its strategic function

in terms of connectivity, positively evaluating the projects implemented in the transit direction within the middle corridor concept. The discussions at the meetings also addressed the security environment and geopolitical challenges in the region.

The parties exchanged opinions on the further steps required for Georgia's inte-

gration into the European Union. They positively evaluated the close high-level contacts between the parties and expressed hope that the country's efforts and current progress would be properly reflected in the European Commission's enlargement report," stated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Both Varhelyi and Darchiashvili wrote on Twitter after the meeting, sharing their thoughts and key points discussed.

EU Commissioner tweeted that the meeting involved discussions about Georgia's progress on the way to the European Union.

"Discussed #Georgia's progress on its EU path. Georgian Minister Darchiashvili assured me that progress on the 12 priorities is well on track. Important to continue & accelerate this work before our 2023 Enlargement Report."

Darchiashvili expressed on Twitter his hope that Georgia's endeavor to join the European Union will be duly recognized.

"At the meeting with EU Commissioner Oliver Varhelyi, we focused on Georgia's progress on the path to EU accession, as well as on the implementation of 12 recommendations. I hope that Georgia's efforts to join the European Union will be properly recognized in the 2023 enlargement report," Darchiashvili wrote.

## Shalva Papuashvili Critiques Ukraine's Moral Pedestal in Relations with Georgia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, expressed that Ukraine may have the moral advantage to engage in discussions with many countries of the European Union or the West from a moral standpoint. However, he believes that the Ukrainian government lacks the right to address Georgia from a moral pedestal, considering Georgia's history of enduring three wars with Russia.

Papuashvili stated that for a considerable period and due to various reasons, Georgia has been considerate of the Ukrainian authorities due to their fondness for the Ukrainian people. He explained that despite the situation, they have refrained from making unnecessary comments. According to Papuashvili, the Ukrainian authorities have chosen to attack the Georgian people as part of their policy, and this has been an ongoing issue for years.

He pointed out specific instances of this attack, such as the appointment of Mikheil Saakashvili as an adviser to the president and the involvement of the 'criminal' Adeishvili, who currently holds a prominent position in the General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine. Papuashvili



alleged that the counterintelligence of Ukraine was involved, with high-ranking officials facilitating Mikheil Saakashvili's unauthorized entry into Georgia. He asserted that they know the organizers behind these actions, with Gia Lortkipanidze being a key figure and deputy head of the counterintelligence department.

Papuashvili expressed his dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian government's actions, as they did not hand over these individuals, whom Georgia considers criminals, to their authorities for justice and accountability. Instead, the Ukrainian government protected and promoted them, leading Papuashvili to criticize their role in sheltering and supporting these individuals who are involved in what Georgia views as attacks against its people.

"For a considerable period and due to various reasons, we have

been considerate of the Ukrainian authorities because of our fondness for the Ukrainian people. We acknowledge this responsibility, and it is well-known that we refrain from making unnecessary comments when the Ukrainian authorities adopt a policy of attacking the Georgian people, which has been an ongoing issue for years.

This attack was evident in the appointment of Mikheil Saakashvili as an adviser to the president and the presence of Adeishvili, a criminal, among the main leaders of the General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine. Furthermore, the counterintelligence of Ukraine, including top intelligence officials, orchestrated Mikheil Saakashvili's unauthorized entry into Georgia. We now have direct knowledge of the organizers, with Gia Lortkipanidze being one of the main figures, the deputy head of the counterintelligence department.

Rather than handing over these criminals to the Ukrainian authorities for justice in Georgia and for the well-being of the Georgian people, the Ukrainian government chose to shelter and promote them, making them part of their government," explained Papuashvili.

According to the Parliament Chairman, the current situation does not impact Georgia's atti-

tude towards the Ukrainian people and the state. He expressed that they hold respect for the state and people of Ukraine. However, he believes that the present government of Ukraine is neglecting the interests of its own people by engaging in actions that attack the Georgian people.

Papuashvili predicted that with time, the ongoing conflict would come to an end, and the Ukrainian people would reevaluate the situation. He believes that eventually, they will recognize that Georgia and its people have been the most sincere supporters of Ukraine throughout this war.

"We respect the state and people of Ukraine; unfortunately, the government of Ukraine today is neglecting the interests of its own people by attacking the Georgian people. Time will pass, and this war will eventually end. The Ukrainian people will have the opportunity to reevaluate the situation and come to the realization that Georgia and the Georgian people were the most sincere supporters of Ukraine during this conflict. However, it is regrettable that this specific faction within the Ukrainian government has chosen to attack Georgia and its people," Papuashvili said.

Papuashvili expressed that while Ukraine may have the moral advantage to engage with many countries from a moral standpoint, he believes that the Ukrainian government lacks the right to talk to Georgia from a moral pedestal. He

pointed out that Georgia itself has gone through three wars with Russia, and as a result, the Ukrainian government does not possess the moral authority to address the Georgian people, Georgia, or its government from a moral standpoint.

According to the Parliament Chairman, the Ukrainian government is attacking the Georgian people by spreading disinformation regarding the circumvention of sanctions. He mentioned that this part of the Ukrainian government's involvement was unfriendly behavior.

"The Ukrainian government is attacking the Georgian people by spreading disinformation regarding the circumvention of sanctions. This involvement of the Ukrainian government was also unfriendly behavior.

Georgia turned out to be the only country for Ukraine that did not feel the need to have an ambassador with the Georgian people, and it believed that the Georgian people should not have an ambassador in their own capital, which was surrounded by bullets. All the ambassadors - of the USA, the European Union - left the country, and the only one that remained was the ambassador of Georgia and the Georgian flag. Despite this, President Zelensky did not express a single thank you for this ambassador. Instead, in fact, he was expelled from the country, so the Ukrainian authorities have no right to speak to Georgia from a moral pedestal," stated Papuashvili.



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5693; Euro - 2.8804; GBP - 3.3157; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8380; Swiss Franc - 2.9938

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

# Saakashvili's Appearance Escalates Georgia-Ukraine Relations, Threatening with Diplomatic Breakdown

The relationship between Georgia and Ukraine may eventually reach a dead end. Saakashvili's video recording of his trial caused a great stir. Ukrainian President Zelensky immediately demanded that he be transferred to Ukraine for treatment, which the "Georgian Dream" will probably not fulfill. The next step could be the severance of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

On July 3, Saakashvili attended the trial remotely. His physical condition was visible in the video footage - it appeared that Mikheil Saakashvili has lost a lot of weight and his appearance has changed.

After the release of Saakashvili's footage, a number of media outlets and politicians expressed concern in the West. The response of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was the most acute one.

He demanded that Saakashvili, who is a citizen of Ukraine, be handed over to Ukraine. He gave the Georgian ambassador to Ukraine 48 hours to return to Tbilisi so that he could hold consultations with the Georgian authorities to hand over Saakashvili to Ukraine.

Ambassador Giorgi Zakareishvili had not yet arrived in Tbilisi from Kyiv when the leaders of the Georgian Dream ruled out holding any consultation. Such statements were made by Irakli Kobakhidze and Archil Talakvadze.

The Speaker of the Parlia-

ment, Shalva Papuashvili, presented claims to Ukraine and said that "the only thing that can be consulted on" is the transfer of Zurab Adeishvili and Gia Lortkipanidze by Ukraine to Georgia.

Adeishvili holds the position of the head of the department in the General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine, while Gia Lortkipanidze is the deputy head of counterintelligence of Ukraine.

Adeishvili, who held a high position in Georgia during Saakashvili's rule, has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for 5 cases, while Gia Lortkipanidze is accused of sneaking Mikheil Saakashvili into Georgia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia considered Zelenski's decision to be "interference in Georgia's domestic affairs."

In Kyiv, the statements of the representatives of the Georgian authorities were considered 'abnormal'. This was said by Maria Barabash, head of the Ukrainian Reforms Office.

The opinion was again voiced that the solution to the created situation would be the pardon of Saakashvili by President Zurabishvili, but Zurabishvili still refuses to do so, besides, the court proceedings against Saakashvili have not been completed. Those who made statements in Georgia that nothing will change in Saakashvili's situ-

ation, do not expect a decision to be made. Gvaramia, who was previously pardoned by President Zurabishvili, noted that Bidzina Ivanishvili has to make a decision.

The Russian government stands behind Ivanishvili. "Russia is killing Ukrainian citizen Saakashvili by the hands of the Georgian government," Zelensky wrote. Irakli Nadiradze, a member of the United National Movement, states that "Ivanishvili is so afraid of Saakashvili that he is ready to break diplomatic relations with his brother Ukraine."

The relations between the two countries can really come to a dead end. Ukrainian Rada deputy Oleksii Goncharenko noted that the visit of the Georgian ambassador to Tbilisi means the freezing of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and until the Saakashvili issue is resolved, the Georgian ambassador will not be able to return to Kyiv.

Davit Arakhamia, the head of the parliamentary faction of the ruling party of Ukraine, said that if steps are not taken regarding Mikheil Saakashvili, international sanctions will probably be imposed. Tbilisi responded to these statements. Irakli Kobakhidze said that Goncharenko's opinion is 'not valuable', and Davit Arakhamia is a 'stateless person' and he does

not act in accordance with the interests of either Georgia or Ukraine. Nothing was said about whose interests he acts in accordance with.

The government of Georgia again claims that there is nothing wrong with Saakashvili, he is simulating and 'resorting to self-harm'. Minister of Justice Rati Bregadze held a special briefing on this. The authorities of Georgia claim that they support Ukraine, and one of the MPs of the Georgian Dream also accused Kyiv of 'ingratitude' for the ambassador's visit to Tbilisi.

However, the Georgian opposition and the Ukrainian government consider the "Georgian Dream" to be an ally of Russia. Mykhailo Podoliak, adviser to the administration of the President of Ukraine, said that the Georgian authorities crossed several red lines:

This is the resumption of air traffic with Russia, as well as demonstrative behavior in favor of Russia. Kyiv has accumulated many complaints against the Georgian authorities, and perhaps the sight of sick and physically weakened Saakashvili turned out to be the last straw, which was followed by the reaction of Zelensky.

It seems that the Saakashvili issue will become more active in the international arena as well. Nika Gvaramia, who was one of Saakashvili's lawyers before his

arrest, said three mistakes that Saakashvili's lawyers made:

1. The main line should have been maintained- Saakashvili's political imprisonment and inhumane treatment, and there should not have been a complete switch to the state of his health.

2. Statements that Saakashvili is leaving Georgian politics should not have been made, which had the opposite effect.

3. It was wrong to request a provisional measure in Strasbourg, given the practice of Strasbourg. The Georgian Dream used the rejection received from Strasbourg to its advantage.

4. Saakashvili has already made a statement about his presence in Georgian politics, thereby somewhat reducing the internal tension in his party and causing some agitation in the opposition.

The parliamentary faction of the "Georgian Dream" demanded the right to meet with Saakashvili, which the chairman of the parliament has forbidden. Georgia is approaching important milestones:

At the end of the year, the European Union is waiting for the answer regarding the status of the candidate, and in 2024 the parliamentary elections should be held, the breath of which can already be felt.

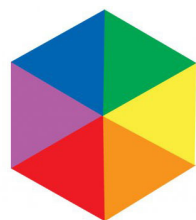
## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### MEPs Call for Sanctions Against Violent Group Alt-Info and Leader Konstantin Morgoshia Amid Safety Concerns at Tbilisi Pride

A group of MEPs is urging for the sanctioning of the violent group Alt-Info and its leader, Konstantin Morgoshia. They have addressed the presidents of the European Commission and the European Council, the EU ambassador to Georgia, and the European Commissioner for Equality in a corresponding letter.

According to the European parliamentarians, the failure of the



THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S INTERGROUP ON LGBT RIGHTS

Georgian authorities and agencies to protect the safety of Tbilisi Pride participants has put the life and health of the organizers at risk.

"We strongly encourage you, as the President of the European Commission, President of the European Council, Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia and the Commissioner for Equality to take all the necessary steps to condemn to the highest degree the LGBTIQ-phobic attacks on Tbilisi Pride on Saturday, 8 July. We strongly encourage targeted sanctions on the group 'Alt-Info' and the oligarch behind the

group, Konstantin Morgoshia. 'Alt-Info' is known to distribute LGBTIQ-phobic hate speech on its media channels and was heavily involved in the attacks on 8 July on Tbilisi Pride. We strongly encourage the relevant authorities to combat LGBTIQ-phobic violence and rhetoric in Georgia and commit to ensuring the safety of especially LGBTIQ people. The latter is especially important since the domestic Georgian authorities demonstrated a lack of pursuing the Tbilisi Pride attacks of 2019 and 2021 involving LGBTIQ-phobic violence. We strongly believe these steps are paramount to ensuring that the fundamental human rights of LGBTIQ persons are secured in Georgia - especially in light of the country's future EU aspirations," the letter reads.

**Acting President of National Bank of Georgia and EU Ambassador Discuss Economic Trends and Financial Cooperation**  
The Acting President of the

National Bank of Georgia, Natia Turnava, held a meeting with the Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, H.E. Pawel Herczynski, at the head office of the National Bank of Georgia.

As per the press service of the



National Bank, the discussion revolved around the country's economic trends, financial stability issues, and projects implemented through cooperation with the European Union.

During the meeting, Turnava provided a detailed overview of the National Bank's consecutive steps towards enforcing and monitoring international sanctions. She emphasized that Georgia's financial institutions

operate in full compliance with the sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus.

The press release highlighted the significance of the support provided by the European Bank

for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Union in developing Georgia's capital market.

Additionally, Turnava addressed the issue of Georgia joining the Single European Payments Area (SEPA) with the EU ambassador. She also discussed the legislative changes aimed at aligning Georgia's legislation even closer to the EU's legislation.

## Weather

Friday, July 21

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 34°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 21°C

Saturday, July 22

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 36°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 21°C

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